

I find that mandating digital television copyright protection seems like a waste of resources.

It is inevitable that there will be a break in the chain anyway no matter what precautions the industry will take - see the movies industry's problems with Motion Picture Academy Oscar screener DVDs and leaks of movies by their own people!

Keep in mind, also, that there will be technology (or a lack of it) that bypasses the flags within the professional and television studios. It is a requirement for the creative process. Who will police the producers?

Ultimately, why have this copyright protection at all? It is there ONLY to stifle or make much more difficult the fair-use rights that customers have experienced for quite some time. We've paid for the content. We want to time-shift it in whatever way we can. What this digital lock-out technology actually does is discriminate between the people who can afford the technology and those who cannot. The companies who use the HDTV bandwidth the FCC has allocated them get a free ride and get a gestapo-like grip of control over who watches what where and on which devices.

The companies are telling their customers that they are inherently untrustworthy. They steal. They lie. They cheat. They don't buy. Ask most people out there how to copy a DVD and you'll get responses like "I don't even know how to program my VCR!".

Truly, who are the companies trying to protect themselves from? The elite? The pirates? Guess what? Every single "copy protection" device ever made has been bypassed within a short amount of time and guess who gets it first - the pirates. Not Joe Consumer. No, Joe Consumer gets to flail in ignorance with compatibility issues between pieces of equipment for the first few years while the actual pirating has already started. The protection was never really there in the first place.

As the music industry (particularly the RIAA) will have to learn (whether it wants to or not), you must sell a compelling product at a reasonable price without making using your product difficult for your customer! Is the FCC going to be the one that has to tell people that the thousands of HDTVs that have already been bought are now unable to fulfill their capability because someone wants to "put a lock on broken front door of the barn after the cattle have all run out"? I certainly wouldn't want my newly purchased TV or DVD recorder to become "less functional" after the fact. That in itself is a bunch of lawsuits waiting to happen.

Sorry to ramble so, but the reality is that the producers are paranoid about losing control that they will never fully have even if the flags and hardware control are implemented. All it will do is frustrate the consumer and bring forth many lawsuits.

Let's save the money and just let it be simple. No more restrictions. Let the information (and indeed, the entertainment) be allowed to flow freely.